

News & Notes

It's summer and time to think about getting out and mowing the lawn. Many injuries result from the misuse of power push mowers and power line trimmers. Many accidents involving power lawn equipment result in severe lacerations and often amputations. Wounds caused by these accidents are prone to infection due to the unsanitary conditions of the environment. Help reduce these accidents by following a few simple safety precautions.

Be sure to read the operator's manual on your mower and know how to operate the machine properly. Never disable or bypass safety devices on your mower. Be sure to read all equipment warning labels. You will want to protect yourself and others against thrown objects by clearing the work area of rocks, sticks, toys or any other materials that could become a missile if struck by the mower blades.

Be sure to keep the discharge chute guard or grass catcher in place at all times. Always have bystanders, especially children, move away from the mowing area. Remember never to leave a running mower unattended. Keep your hands and feet away from the mower blades while it is running. Should the discharge chute clog or the grass catcher becomes full, stop the engine before attempting to clear the clog or empty the bag.

Do not walk backwards while pulling the mower toward you. If you trip, the mower could end up on top of your feet or legs. Mow in a forward direction whenever possible and mow across the slope of hillsides, not up and down the slope.

To ensure good footing, wait until the grass is dry before mowing and handle the fuel safely. Before refueling, stop the engine and allow it to cool. Wipe up spilled fuel or allow it to evaporate before starting an engine and never refuel gasoline-powered equipment indoors.



June 2012

Don't Slip Up!

Stay on your feet on the job

June is **National Safety Month**. The theme for Week 3 this year is preventing slips, trips, and falls. Thousands of disabling injuries—and even deaths—occur each year as a result of slips, trips, and falls. But you can do many things to prevent these injuries, including practicing good housekeeping:

- Keep walkways, aisles, and stairs free of all items.
- Promptly clean up any leaks or spills on floors, stairs, entranceways, and loading docks.
- Repair or report floor problems.
- Block off and mark floor areas that are being cleaned or repaired.
- Keep cords, power cables, and air hoses out of walkways.
- Promptly place trash in proper containers.
- Keep drawers closed.

In addition, always take these precautions on stairs and dock edges:

- Report missing or broken stair rails and slippery or damaged treads.
- Walk, don't run, on stairs.
- Hold onto stair rails while going up and down.
- Don't jump on or off platforms and loading docks, and stay away from edges.
- Don't carry a load you can't see over, especially on stairs or around dock edges.

Pay attention to your surroundings:

- Focus on where you're going, what you're doing, and what lies ahead. Expect the unexpected.
- Wear sturdy shoes with nonskid soles and flat heels.
- Wipe your feet when you come in from rain or snow.
- Report or replace burned out lights or inadequate lighting.
- Watch out for floors that are uneven, have holes, etc.
- Keep your hands at your sides, not in your pockets, for balance.
- Walk slowly and slide your feet on slippery surfaces.
- Sit in chairs with all four chair legs, wheels, or casters on the floor.

News & Notes

Power Line Trimmers

Be sure and read the operator's manual and get proper instructions before operating a trimmer. Never operate the trimmer with the guard removed. The work area should be cleared of objects such as sticks, rocks, wire, etc., before you start work. Clear the area of people and animals for a radius of approximately 35 feet.

You should keep the cutting line or blade away from your feet and legs and position the trimmer away from your body to avoid contact with the muffler or other hot engine parts. Move the trimmer in a sweeping motion away from your body.

As for personal protective equipment (PPE) be sure to always wear eye protection such as safety glasses or goggles, and you will want to protect your ears with earplugs. Wear close-fitting clothes, long pants or slacks, and closed-toe shoes with traction soles. Do not operate any power equipment while barefoot or when wearing sandals. Gloves should be worn to serve or adjust equipment, especially with the blades.

Remember to practice safety! Don't learn it by accident!



Pests Getting Pesky? Strategies for Protecting Your Workplace

They say that cockroaches could survive a nuclear holocaust, so is it any surprise that they sometimes defy our best efforts to keep them out of our homes and workplaces? Other insects and pests can periodically find their way in as well.

But, the situation goes from bad to worse when employees take matters into their own hands bringing in cans of insect-killing chemicals. Pesticides are toxic and should not be brought into the workplace or used without the employer's knowledge and approval. Building managers are responsible for filling holes and applying pesticides in the building, but all employees can help to make the workplace less attractive to pests if they will:

Be fruitless. Many pests are attracted to fruit. Workers should not leave fruit in or on their desks overnight; rather, they should take it home or store it in the refrigerator. **Put a lid on it.** Nonperishable or dry snacks should be kept in sealed plastic containers, not in plastic bags. **Do the dishes.** Dishes and utensils soiled by food attract pests. Dishes should be washed after each lunch break or shift. **Clear the decks.** Dirty surfaces also attract pests. Counters should be wiped down at the end of lunch or a shift. **Bag it.** Food wastes should be disposed of in compost or garbage cans that have plastic liners. These cans should be emptied each night. **Pick up.** Clutter provides hiding and nesting places for pests, including rodents. Employees should keep their workplace clutter-free and stored items off the floor. **Learn good plant care.** Workplace plants are beneficial unless they become infested with gnats. To prevent this, do not overwater plants. Plants infested with gnats should be removed from the workplace.

Rather than treating pest problems on their own, employees should let their supervisor or building manager know about pest problems or sanitation issues as soon as they are discovered. **Tell.** Workers should report spills, plumbing leaks, or areas that need cleaning. **Take note.** When reporting a pest, workers should make a note of evidence they have seen, including droppings, damage by the pest, or the pest itself as well as where and when they made the observation. The more information employees can provide, the more effectively you can deal with the problem.

Nail Gun Safety

Take precautions with this power tool

Nail guns are extremely helpful tools if they are used properly. However, they can also be extremely dangerous. Treat nail guns with the respect they deserve.

- **Learn about the different types of trigger mechanisms** used on nail guns and the hazards of each trigger type.
- **Understand risk factors on the job** that can lead to nail gun accidents and injuries.
- **Use the full sequential trigger nail gun**, which is the safety type, especially for placement work where the lumber must be held in place by hand—for example, building walls and nailing blocking, fastening studs to plates and blocks to studs, and installing trusses.
- **Take training seriously**, learn safety features, and practice using nail guns safely.
- **Follow required work procedures** for nail gun use, and never break any safety rules.
- **Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment**, including hard hat, high-impact safety glasses or goggles (marked ANSI Z87.1), and hearing protection.
- **Report accidents**, injuries, and near misses.
- **Seek medical attention immediately** after nail gun injuries, even for those that appear minimal.